



## **THE INFLUENCE OF MYSTICISM ON WESLEY AND METHODISM**



THE INFLUENCE OF MYSTICISM ON WESLEY AND METHODISM

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## CHAPTER I.



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION

It is perhaps well to say something as to the exact sense in which the term "Mysticism" is to be understood in this paper. It is one of the most abused words in the English language, it has been used in different and often mutually exclusive senses by religion, poetry, and philosophy: has been claimed as an excuse for every kind of occultism, for dilute transcendentalism, vapid symbolism, religious or aesthetic sentimentality, and bad metaphysics. On the other hand, it has been freely employed as a term of contempt by those who have criticized these things. Perhaps sooner or later it may be restored to its old meaning, as the science or art of the spiritual life.

Broadly speaking, it is usually understood by real students of the subject to mean, "the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order; what ever be the theological formula under which that order is understood." This tendency, in great Mystics, gradually captures the whole field of consciousness, it dominates their life and, in the experience called "mystic union" attains its end. Christian Mystics call this end God-(Jehovah).



The phase of thought or feeling which we call Mysticism has its origin in that which is the raw material of all religion, and perhaps all philosophy and art as well, namely, that dim consciousness of the beyond, which is part of our nature as human beings. Religious Mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or, more generally, as the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal. We may call this sense the voice of God speaking to us. Our consciousness of the beyond is the raw material of all religion. But, being it self formless, it can not be brought directly into relations with forms of our thought. Accordingly it has to express itself by symbols, which are as it were flesh and bones of ideas. It is the tendency of all symbols to petrify or evaporate, and either process is fatal to them. They soon repudiate their mystical origin, and forthwith lose their religious content. Then comes a return to the fresh springs of the inner life-- a revival of spirituality in the midst of formalism or unbelief. This is the historical function of Mysticism--it appears as an independent active principle, the spirit of reformatiions and revivals. As a type of religion, then, Mysticism seems to rest on the following prepositions:-



First, the soul (as well as the body) can see and perceive. We have an organ or faculty for the discernment of spiritual truth, which, in its proper sphere, is as much to be trusted as the organs of sensation in theirs.

The second preposition is that since we can only know what is akin to ourselves, man, in order to know God, must be a partaker of Divine nature. "What we are, that we behold; and what we behold, that we are", says Ruybreek. The Divine spark already shines within us, but it has to be searched for in the innermost depth of our personality, and its light diffused over our whole being.

This brings us to the third preposition--"Without holiness no man may see the Lord"; or, as it is expressed positively in the sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Sensuality and selfishness are absolute disqualifications for knowing "the things of the spirit of God". These fundamental doctrines are very clearly laid down in I John 3:2,3., "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested



we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him, even as He is". The filial relation to God is already claimed, but the vision is inseparable from likeness to Him, which is a hope, not a possession, and is only to be won by, "purifying ourselves even as He is pure"

Purification removes the obstacles to our union with God, but our guide on the upward path, is love. Love has been defined as "interest in its highest power"; while others have said that "it is the essence of love to be disinterested". The contradiction is merely a verbal one. The two definitions mark different starting points, but the "two ways of love" should bring us to the same goal. The possibility of disinterested love, in the ordinary sense, ought never to have been called into question. "Love is not love" when it asks for reward. Nor is the love of man to God any exception. He who tries to be holy in order to be happy shall be neither one. In the words of the Theologia Germanica "so long as a man seeketh his own highest good because it is his, he will never find it." The Mystics here are unanimous.

The Mystic as we have seen, as we have seen, makes it his life's aim to be transformed into the likeness of Him in whose image he was created. He loves to figure his pathes as a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, which must be climbed step by step. This scala perfectionis is generally divided into three stages.



the illuminative, while the third, which is really the goal rather than a part of the journey, is called the unitive life, or, the state of perfect contemplation.

Ewald says, "the true Mystic never withdraws himself wilfully from the business of life, no, not even from the smallest business". He is at any rate saying nothing which conflicts with the principles of Mysticism. Tauler says, "one can spin, another can make a shoe; and all these are gifts of the Holy Ghost. I tell you, if I were not a priest, I should esteem it a great gift that I was able to make shoes, and would try to make them so well as to be a pattern to all." The Mystic is so often misrepresented, as being dreamers, lazy, etc. Tauler is careful to put social service on its true bases. He also says "workers of love are more acceptable to God than lofty contemplations." And "all kinds of skill are gifts of the Holy Ghost". And again "sloth often makes men fain to be excused from their work and set to contemplations. Never trust in a virtue that has never been put into practice." The pupils of Erhart all led strenuous lives themselves, and were no advocates of pious indolence. Of course there are



many different forms of Mysticism. This accounts for the various definitions. The definitions are usually given according to the personal experience of the one defining, or else according to the particular form with which one is most familiar. Underhill says there are "four characteristics of true Mysticism--It is (1) practical, (2) Transcendental, (3) the Mystic is a lover, (4) his object is union with the absolute."

Mysticism then is not an opinion: it is not a philosophy. It has nothing in common with the pursuits of occult knowledge. It is not mere the power of contemplating eternity. "It is the name of that organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the love of God: the achievement here and now of the immortal heritage of man." Or you may say "It is the art of establishing his conscious relation with the absolute".

Christian Mysticism is hardly a native product, but has been derived partly from heathern sources. The Greek and other Neo-Platonist made the primary contribution, and later the influence of Eastern Mysticism was felt. By this I do not mean that the New Testament shews no traces of Mysticism; the contrary is the case. Jesus' words are filled with Mystical significance at times, and Paul and John were



both Mystics, the former telling us that he was caught up into the third heaven and heard things which he could not express in language. "John was a Mystic theologian, who confessedly wrote his version of the gospel history in order to establish a doctrinal point of view."

The endeavor of the human mind to grasp the divine source or the ultimate reality of things is the philosophical basis of Mysticism. "Speculative Mysticism has occupied itself largely with these two subjects--the immanence of God in nature, and the relation of human personality to the Divine.---The unity of all existence is a fundamental doctrine of Mysticism. God is in all and all is in God." The point of departure for the philosophical Mystic is the notion of being or unity, and so the immanence of God is the logical conclusion. By means of the "ever soul" this immanence is discovered and utilized.

We can well see how many Mystics claim to be and thought themselves to be pantheist, when all they really meant was that they believed in the immanence of God. with this however, they also believed in the transcendence of God, and never lost the idea of personality. "We have to distinguish also between Mysticism and pantheism. In pantheism God is lost in the world, and is no longer related to it; He has no reality except in nature, and ceases to be self-related



term of self. Therefore, no religion is possible in real pantheism. When men say they are pantheist, they usually mean that they are Mystics like Paul. In Mysticism is implied both the immanence and the transcendence of the divine being in the universe; in pantheism only the immanence. If the leaves could be conscious of their relation to the tree, they could be to that extent Mystics." Mysticism is religion bringing the soul into the immediate presence of God, And insists on its right to live in immediate fellowship with Him. It is the very heart of religion.

Notwithstanding the excesses and mistakes, Mysticism enriches our religion and continually renews it by personal experiences, which cannot be denied or explained away, and by its optimistic attitude leads the world onward with an increasing faith. The desire to be in harmony with the Divine will, which is an integral part of Mysticism, inspires the true Mystic to an ethical and practical religious life which shows itself in altruistic deeds.

It is very difficult to obtain a satisfactory definition of Mysticism due to the fact that we have no official statements from these designated Mystics as to what Mysticism is. The Mystics also differ



so much from each other (Wesley noted this when writing against them) that it is extremely difficult to find elements which are common to all. Without attempting to define the term as such and then arbitrarily "placing" the Mystics, let us attempt to find these elements which are common to most of these, if not to all, who are accepted as Mystics.

Complete union (not necessarily Metaphysical) with God (Christ) seems to be the goal. The manner of the manifestation of that union in life (physical phenomena, visions, ecstasies, etc.) must be considered as merely incidental and not of the essence of Mysticism. Immediacy of this union was emphasized. (Immediacy of feeling religius/was the main thing, including a desire to get away from the sensible, finite world.) This did not necessarily imply that all means were discarded, for we find Mystics (Bernard, Tauler, Arndt, etc.) who emphasized and employed the ordinary means of grace. The Bible and Christ were retained and ever deemed necessary. Not the manner but the fact of union, was the essential. There was however, a strong tendency present to <sup>the</sup> ~~discrd~~ means of grace and every thing else that regarded as external.



As an individual personal experience this union implied that man possessed a sense thru which he might communicate with the spiritual world. To know God there must be something divine in man. This sense was sometimes called the inner light, (other than, but not opposed to, the rational faculty), the light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world. Thru a personal experience above the experience of every day life (new birth with Boehme), brought about in various ways, man becomes convinced, he knows (not thru reason, but thru a "seeing"; cf, Jene's "Spiritual Reformers" page XXV) that he is union with God. His personality becomes unified, where before there had been discord. The "old man" dies with the birth of the new life. The result is generally represented as an inrush of acstatic feelings, joy and peace. Man is sanctified and full of a new energy. He is raised above himself. Three stages in this development are sometimes given. - the purgative, the illuminative, and unitive-- but need not be regarded as essential. The last stage and goal brings the Mystic into such a lofty spiritual state that words fail him when he attempts to describe his experience. This accounts for his frequent use of language which is merely symbolic of the indescribable experience. Various ex-



pressions have been used by the Mystics, as "union with Christ", "love of the soul for the Brigegreen", "languishing love of God", "Christ in us", etc.. Mysticism is extremely individualistic. The Soul's welfare is the main interest.



## CHAPTER II.



## CHAPTER II.

### MYSTICAL INFLUENCIES UPON WESLEY

Wesley decided on his career when twenty-two years old, and set himself with characteristic thoroughness to prepare for it. His own record is: "When I was about twenty-two my father pressed me to enter into Holy orders. I began to alter the whole form of my conversation and to set in earnest to enter upon a new life." He was a student familiar with books, and accustomed to approach every thing from the literary side. He became himself to devotional literature; and three writers, widely separated from each other, and very diverse in genius and atmosphere-- Thomas a Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law--profoundly influenced him. He read the immortal book *De Imitatione Christi*, and as he did, "I began to see" he says, "that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions.....I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week; I watched against all sin whether in word or deed,..... so that now doing so much and living so good a life I doubted not that I was a good Christian." The writer of the *Imitatione* distilled into the sentences " all



that is elevating and passionate in all the older Mystics." These sentences stirred deep religious feeling in Wesley's heart.

But Wesley took neither himself nor his teachers on trust. He interrogated them as he did his own spiritual condition, with tireless diligence. His common sense, for example, rejects the ascetic element in the *De Imitatione Christi*, its quarrel with innocent gladness, its exaggeration of the spiritual value of sorrow. "I could not think" he tells his mother "that when God sent us into the world He should irreversibly decree that we should be perpetually miserable in it." His father on the whole agreed with a Kempis, "mortification" he said, "was still an indispensable Christian duty". Wesley with a fine readiness, absorbed what was spiritually wholesome in his new teachers. From the *Imitatione Christi* he learned something of the attitude and range of the spiritual life. After reading it he says, "I saw that giving even all my life to God, supposing it possible to do this, would profit me nothing, unless I gave my heart; yea, all my heart to Him."

William Law, no doubt, influenced Wesley at this stage more profoundly than even Thomas a Kempis. Law's



"Serious Call" is one of the great books of Christian literature. Wesley late in life, and after he had renounced Law himself, as a religious guide, yet declared the "Serious Call" to be "unsurpassed in the English language for beauty of expression and justness and depth of thought." The effect this great and powerful writer produced on Wesley he himself has described, "Meeting now with Mr. Law's 'Christian Perfection' and 'Serious Call', although I was much much offended with many parts of both, yet they convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and depth and breadth of the law of God. The light flowed so mightily upon my soul that every thing appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help; resolved as I had never done before, not to prolong the time of obeying Him. And, by my continuous endeavor to keep His whole law inward and outward to the uttermost of my power, I was persuaded that I should be accepted of Him, and that I was even then in a state of salvation." Law once told Wesley, "You would have a philosophical religion; but there can be no such thing. Religion is the most simple thing in the world. It is only, 'We love Him because He first loved us'". What words could go more directly to the heart of Christianity. Wesley was certainly under Law's influence. When he considered going to Georgia, he asked



Law for his advice and followed it.

Wesley was influenced by German Pietism, but just how much is hard to say. Pietism had a great many Mystical elements in it, such as the inner religious life holiness, etc. The Mysticism in Pietism was one cause of the violent opposition of Lutheran Orthodoxy. The elements of Mysticism imbedded in Methodism brought forth a similar opposition on the part of the unmystical Churchmen of the eighteenth century, to whom the notion of a direct personal communication between God and man was a "very horrid thing". They limited the inspiration of God to A book, but denied it to the soul.

Wesley had a direct influence of Mysticism. Boehm influenced Arndt, Spener, and Franke, and thru the latter Zinzendorf and the Moravians. Wesley was influenced greatly by the Moravians. He was influenced to a less thru Law, who in turn had received his inspiration from Boehm. Wesley was acquainted with the "Pietas Hollensis" though how early in life is unknown. In his Journal Wesley expresses the highest regard the German Pietist. This was at the time of his visit to Germany. He also came personally in contact with the work



of Pietism before he made his trip to Germany. This came about thru the organization of the religious society about 1678, in which a Pietist from Germany, Dr. Jarneck, was one of the prime movers. Wesley saw the importance of societies.

Thru the Moravians Pietism entered into intimate relationship with Methodism, and was instrumental in permanently influencing some of its institutions. That he was influenced by his contact with Halle Pietism and with the Moravians goes without saying. This is based on the assumption that the renewed Church of the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren with the founding of Herrnhut 1722, was an offshoot of Pietism. Spener stood sponsor at Zinzendorf's baptism. The latter had a tutor from Franke's school at Halle before he went to Halle itself at the age of ten. (Cranz, 164) In Franke's home he met returned Missionaries, which undoubtedly gave rise to his zeal for foreign missions. When he studied at Wittenberg he gained the reputation of being a rigid Pietist. Boehler also received influence from Spener, for he read one of his pamphlets which had been recommended by Spangenberg.) Moravian influence upon Wesley reached its climax with his visit



to Germany.

Into various old forms which Wesley had before him he put new life and saw new elements, but it is difficult to say just what these were. At Herrnhut he saw models for his love feasts, watch night services, band and class meetings, his schools, the elaborate system of Church government which left no individual out of consideration, etc.. We do not know how much of these Wesley received directly from the Moravians. The break with the Moravians did not destroy the influence which had been exerted upon Wesley previous to that event. We see that Wesley was influenced by the Mystical elements of Pietism and the Moravians.



### CHAPTER III.



## CHAPTER III.

### MYSTICAL ELEMENTS OF METHODISM

The founder of Methodism has probably never been included among Mystics. He himself denied that he ever was in the "Way of Mysticism". A careful study of his writings, however will reveal pronounced Mystical elements. According to Wesley's own definition of Mysticism, he was no mystic, but his definition is open to criticism. If a Mystic is one who denied justification by faith, who denied the imputation of Christ's righteousness; who taught that God was insusceptible to anger and that the work of God in the soul was best promoted by anguish and by spiritual martyrdoms by occasional absence of God, that joy in the spirit was not to be indulged in nor God to be selfishly loved; who was guided solely by inward impressions and not by the written word; who advised retirement and entire seclusion from men; who strove to fulfill the law by passivity, Quietism, and contemplations rather than by outward works; who taught that we were to be justified for the sake of our inward righteousness; who slighted the means of grace-- then Wesley's assertion that he was not to be numbered among them must



be accepted. BUT WE MUST LIKE WISE RULE OUT OF THE WAY OF MYSTICISM SOME WHO ARE COMMONLY CALLED MYSTICS. A Mystic like Arndt, for instance, would have been in sympathy with practically every thing that Wesley taught. Wesley's opposition was directed mainly against speculative Mysticism, and with that form of it he really had very little of it in common. But his affinity for the practical form was more intimate than he thought. With him the new birth took the place of the Mystical union.

Let us emphasize some of those elements which have Mystical color. Wesley was a trichotomist, arguing that the spirit in man was the highest principle, the soul being its immediate clothing. That immortal spirit could come into direct relation with the eternal world by means of a sense in man called faith, and living faith was only the only immediate essential means of uniting man with God. Though Wesley was Churchman and he made much use of the ordinary means of grace, he deprecated a slavish dependence upon them and reprobated every thing which smacked of the opus operatum. In describing the Mystics and others who refrained from using ordinary means of grace because of their "horrid profanation" he states that they experience the



grace of God without them because they were in apostasy where they could not use them. He he thus implied that God might send His spirit directly and immediately into the soul of man. Wesley thought of the new birth as being the result, not of acquired, but infused, habits or principles. A particular, immediate inspiration is given by the Holy Spirit which is not to be identified with the "motions of our own nature". A special assistance of God's Spirit is needed aside from that furnished by the scriptures, for the scriptures can not save the soul. How this spirit works on the soul is inexplicable, but he thinks that it might be an "inspiring" (breathing) good thought into man. This perceptible inspiration came not only in prayer and special religious exercises, but in every phase of a man's life.

Wesley hesitated to make the means to make the means a matter of vital concern so long as love, the end of the Christian dispensation, was attained. Not only did God's grace come from without and from above; but when the soul was hid with Christ in God, man breathed into God, and this spiritual respiration sustained the life of God in the soul. In his notes on John 15 we find no comment excluding the notion of an organic union with man of God; but we do not find his comment on John 17:23 which speaks of supreme union with God. Wesley may have omitted this because



of an aversion to the use of Mystical language, and this aversion accounts for this opposition to the Mystics. In one of his letters to William Law the fact stands out that the difference which he emphasized lay as much in divergent terminology as in different content of thought. Wesley admits this, for he complains not so much of the falsity of thought as of the "amazing queerness of language". Law refers to the highest union with God, Wesley prefers to designate as yielding the whole to God. Both agreed that man possessed a sense thru which the spirit world communicated with his soul after the inspiration of the Holy Spirit had aroused it to activity. Wesley acquiesced in Law's statement concerning the apprehension of the all of God together with our nothingness. They practically had the same ideas about the witness of the spirit and the new birth. At the close of the letter to Law, Wesley advised him to reject "high flown bombast, unintellegible jargon".

Wesley had a feeling that Mysticism was inevitable bound up with obscurity and irrationality. Boehme, for instance, was given credit for having written many truths; but his "crude indigested" philosophy



was too much for the logical and practical Wesley. He insisted that the essence of Boehme's teaching that dwelt with vital religion, had all been taught before and with better phraseology.

Another Mystical element in connection with the new birth was the doctrine that illumination came thru conversion, after the heart had been circumcised and the old Adam purged. This similar to the Mystical via purgative preceding the via illuminativa. An entry in the Journal (Aug. 9, 1750) gives the remarkable experience of an old woman who would have been highly praised by the classical Mystics because she had reached the stage of illumination, for months seeing the "uncloaked face of God", after having passed thru a severe purgative trial. "Because she wrote no book full of unintelligible phrases, Wesley had nothing but praise for her."

The doctrine "preventing grace" of Wesley's, corresponded to the inner light of the Mystics, though he tried to minimize its importance by calling it a faint twilight. It was man's duty to stir up the "spark of grace" that was within. In harmony with the Mystics, Wesley taught that WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN



SHALL SEE GOD, that the inward powre was the main essential, for without it the understanding and the outward means were of no avail. Wesley said that all right affections have their origin in disinterested love. This statement tends towards the Mystical standpoint. Wesley criticised Masheim's history on the ground that it condemned the Mystics in a lump, and Wesley also inferred that it was done because of the authors own lack of inward religion. He felt himself in perfect harmony a Kämpis, Wesley abridged and published the Imitatione. He commends the author's emphasis upon the fact that the Christian was to become "one spirit with God" so that he might become a partaker of the divine nature. Wesley also expressed regard for madam Beuringon (Journal Feb. 14, 1774) and Madam Guyon, and Fehelen were not to styled "distracted enthusiasts" (Journal Aug. 31, 1771) ]

The above account shows that Wesley consciously opposed a Mysticism which he failed to understand. "He judged the Mystical spirit by a criterien which he would not have applied to his own system, for he magnified too many of the incidental by-products of Mysticism, to the disparagement of the essentials.



He identified the inner essence of the teaching too much with its external clothing and consequently was unable to see the close affinity which some of his own doctrines had with the Mystical way." He himself said "different persons may use different expressions and yet mean the same thing".(Works I., 171) He was no doubt sincere in his opposition and, from his own standpoint, justified; but that does not preclude the possibility of our judgment that his system contained some Mystical elements. These may be summarized as follows;

I. IMMEDIACY OF FIRST-HAND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE; (In Works I., 61, he states that religion could subsist without means. True religion is no outward thing. Due administration of the sacraments he regarded as requisite to the well being/rather than being/ of the Church. Works V., 25. ) and immediate and perceptible inspiration.

II. MAN POSSESSED A SENSE OTHER THAN REASON BY WHICH HE CAME INTO DIRECT RELATION WITH THE INFINITE.

III. THE NEW BIRTH REESTABLISHED VITAL UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD WHICH SIN HAD DISSOLVED; MAN'S PERSONALITY BECAME UNIFIED.

IV. ILLUMINATION AFTER PURGATION.

V. THE INNER LIGHT UNIVERSAL.



VI. WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE GOD.

There were other elements of Mystical writers that he strongly opposed such as--the Quietistic, Antinomian, and passive elements; also the emphasis placed upon seclusion and upon solitary and unsocial forms of religious expression.



## CHAPTER IV.



## CHAPTER IV.

### CONCLUSION

The investigation presented in the foregoing chapters we hope has demonstrated the justification of our thesis that Mysticism was significant in the origin and development of Methodism. There is no doubt of certain Mystical elements in Methodism, no doubt that the most vital doctrines of Wesley are Mystical. He was certainly influenced by Mysticism. William Law did notable preparatory work for Wesley's revival; he was a promoter of the religious societies of the Anglican church and published books which exhaled the spirit of Monastic religiosity. Many people were led into a deeper religious life, and Wesley once confessed that the "Serious Call" was the spark which started the revival. There the young disciple read about the need of a change of heart and renunciation of the world. He was led to see that legalistic traditionalism, with its dependence upon forms and rites was insufficient. That Law greatly influenced Wesley at the beginning of his career is patent from numerous references in the Journal. As has been mentioned before Wesley was influenced by several Mystic writers, the names of which we have mentioned as we made our investigation.



It is hoped that opponents of Mysticism will view with sympathy, calmness, and fairness the facts cited above, which show Mysticism's relation to Wesley and Methodism. A careful study of Wesley's writings reveals pronounced Mystical elements. Some will mention the fact that he fought Mysticism, but we have shown above that his opposition was against speculative Mysticism. He was not alone in this attitude for many of Mystics have no taste for speculation or philosophy; but accept on authority the church dogma, and devote their whole attention to the perfecting of the spiritual life in the knowledge and love of God. But this can not be said of some outstanding Mystics. Mysticism revolts against dry formalism and cold rationalism.

"Mysticism teaches three great lessons in truth" says Buckham. The first is TO LOOK FOR REALITY WITHIN. It is thus that the Mystics find God, by turning from outward proof and argument to the inner witness of the soul itself. Many Mystics discover this only after long years of search. Thus Augustine cried, "I was seeking Thee outside of myself, and could not find the God of my heart". (Confessions VI.1). "I asked Thy creatures of Thee" wrote Fenelon, "and not once thought of finding Thee in the depths of my heart, where Thee hadst never ceased to dwell".



"Halt ! whither runnest thou ? Heaven is in thee; seeketh thou God elsewhere, thou missest Him ever and ever". Exclaimed Angelus Selesius. Madam Guyon sought for God in vain until her confessor told her to seek him within. Then she knocked and it was opened unto her. Do not the followers of Wesley dwell much on the witness of the spirit--God in us. "Ye are the temple of the living God." God, Christ, truth, holiness, all lie--the Mystic is ever assuring us--in the inner spirit world. "It is the inner witness, my son," said Samuel Wesley to John, "the inner witness" Only after all outward search is abandoned and one turns to the world within, will he find what he seeks and what evry soul, when it awakes, must desire above every thing else.

A second lesson in truth taught us by the Mystics is, TO FIND MEANING IN MYSTERY. To the scientist, as such, mystery is a challenge, a foe, a problem to be attacked and resolved into understandable factors. For the purpose of science this is the only right attitude. Let us not fail to recognize the full value of Science. Without her it would have gone hard with humanity. To the Mystic, mystery is



prescient, purposeful, prophetic. It invests him, yet does not oppress him, for he feels that within it, are veiled great and gracious meanings. "Behold I show you a mystery".

A third and kindred truth-lesson of Mysticism is TO FIND THE ETERNAL IN THE TEMPORAL. Inge says this is the heart of Mysticism, regarded from the point of view of truth. Mysticism teaches us the true value of solitude, the wealth of simplicity, and the superiority of being, above having or doing. Three great lessons in virtue come to us thru the Mystics, first to find contentment in humility, next to find victory in self-sacrifice, and third to find self-fulfillment and happiness in love. The unitive life, life of perfect love for God. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" exclaimed Paul, also "God is love". "Love is stronger than death" sang the martyrs that faced the lions and flames undaunted. "Love can win all" says the Mystic missionaries, and they dared forest and frost and savage sword. Love has been the great power, and is the triumphant secret of the universe. Love will save the world.

The Mystics have greatly enriched life and literature. If we commence with the New Testament and pass in swift review, some of the most precious volumes in



the treasury of Christian Mystical literature, it may seem a heterogeneous company of books that we bring together, from different ages and races, and mental environments, yet it will still serve to show the remarkable range and wealth of Christian Mystical literature. Surely Mysticism greatly enriched Wesley's doctrines.

The end.



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